624 blessing the gardens before firing, the seeds before sowing, and the first fruits of a number of crops. He must organise the payment of tribute and labour to the district chief and pass on chiefly orders and requests. His privileges include the right to personal service from younger relatives and tribute of beer and/or meat. Primarily, however, the position is valued not for economic advantage but for the authority it brings, the command over a small following and the favour of a chief. The sanctions for this authority consist mainly in the headman's popularity, the strength of kinship ties between him and the villagers and their belief that it is dangerous to allow an elder relative to die while cherishing a sense of injury. Ultimately, of course, the headman's power depends on the support of his territorial chief and nowadays of the British Administration.

621 The functions of the different types of Bemba chief differ only in degree from those of the headman. Like a headman, a chief is in charge of his
622 own village, his *musumba*, and he tries to maintain and augment this community by acquiring a reputation for popularity and generosity. A chief's village in the old days was described as having thousands of inhabitants. Big chiefs' villages observed by Richards in 1934 had 400 to 600 huts. They were divided into quarters (*fitenta*) ruled over by loyal supporters of the chief, known as *bafilolo*.

622 Besides administering his own village the chief was responsible for mak-
ing and confirming the appointment of headmen; and presiding over a court
[692] composed of advisers mainly drawn from his own village. Witchcraft cases
had to be brought to a chief and only the more important among them could
[681] administer the poison ordeal by *mwafi*. The chief could in the old days punish by savage mutilations and by selling a man into slavery. Economically the chief was responsible for initiating agricultural activities by performing the necessary rite at the time of tree-cutting, sowing or harvesting. With the tribute labour at his disposal he made big gardens and built granaries from which he fed his courtiers, messengers and workers. The chief
[721] initiated military raids and other forms of warfare, and the great Bemba chiefs maintained their monopoly of Arab guns which they traded for slaves. Bemba country was, in fact, an area of strong centralised government. The chieftains of the Aushi, Unga and other associated tribelets were on a much smaller scale and weaker in political organisation.

[789] But the most important and characteristic activities of the Bemba chiefs are ritual. They are reckoned to have in their own persons power to bless and curse. They have to be protected from contact with death and to keep
[763] sex taboos of various kinds for the welfare of the whole territory. It is probable that the Bemba Paramount Chief in the old days might have been described as a "divine king" in Frazer's sense of the word; he was strangled
[769] when on the point of death so that his spirit should pass into the land. The Bemba chief derives his ritual power from the fact that he has succeeded to the names of dead chiefs and is thus enabled to call on a long line of ancestral spirits. Chiefs possess sacred relics - usually stools - which are
622 known as *babenye* and kept in special huts protected by "wives of the dead"
778 or descendants of wives of earlier chiefs. An approach to the ancestral spirits is made at these shrines. Chiefs also sacrifice at the deserted shrines of their predecessors (*nfuba*) and at other spirit centres in the area.

Much of their power depends on the keeping of sex taboos and the